

# 2 0 0 1 A n n u a l R e p o r t



For Clark County's Department of Community Development,

## "There is no finish line in this race."

-Rich Carson, director

### The pace of growth...

When Census 2000 results were announced last year, they confirmed what we already suspected—Clark County was the fastest growing county both in the state of Washington and the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. An average of almost 25 people per day or 107,185 new citizens moved into the county during the 10-year period measured, bringing the county's total population to 345,238.

Such rapid growth brings with it the demand for new housing, retail space, industries, and infrastructure. Nowhere is that impact felt more strongly than at the Clark County Department of Community Development, because our job is to support the community's desire to look forward, anticipate change, and manage growth.

During 2001, Community Development worked on such issues as:

- Facilitating infill development within our urban areas.
- Placing a development moratorium in the area around the interchange at Interstate 5 and 134<sup>th</sup> Street because of traffic congestion.
- Placing a moratorium on the proliferation of cell towers in order to give us time to develop better regulations to govern them.
- Reviewing plans for and inspected thousands of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.



- Continuing our work on updating the county's *20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan*, which is planning for 486,225 people by 2023.

At year's end, the growth continued almost in defiance of an officially declared economic *recession*. While we heard what seemed like weekly announcements about layoffs in the metropolitan area, the building permit activity in Clark County soared. In the last three months of 2001 the number of building permits was up 10 percent over last year. The actual total valuation of the construction for 2001 was higher than 2000, reaching \$394 million.

One can only wonder what 2002 will bring.



### Letter from the director

The Community Development Department has worked hard to improve our organization – both *quantitatively* and *qualitatively*. In 2001, the department proved that “innovative government” is not an oxymoron.

**Customer service.** Since January 2001, we have started collecting customer service evaluation forms from the public. The forms are out on counters throughout the building and can be mailed in anonymously. A full 90 percent of the 48 responses were positive ones, and our report card grade for “overall service” is a B+.

**Customer advocate.** I don't think anyone doubts that our new customer advocate is doing a terrific job as the department's ombudsman. Since she started in May 2000, she has worked with 815 different customers and followed up on 200 referrals from the Board of Clark County Commissioners.

**Telephone callbacks.** We set a goal of returning 95 percent of our phone calls within 24 hours and we have consistently met our target in 2001.

**Performance audit.** In December 2000 a performance audit of the department was presented to the Board of Clark County Commissioners. We have acted on 70 percent of the 43 recommendations and scheduled implementation on all of them.

**Communication.** In order to improve our communication with our customers we have improved our web site, started a monthly e-news publication that goes out to 500 customers a month, opened Community Development University to the public, and started writing a monthly article for the Vancouver Business Journal.

**Private sector training.** We started inviting business people to give staff “private sector training.” Our first three presenters talked about commercial development (RSV Construction), residential development (New Tradition Homes), and development financing (Bank of Clark County).

**Cycle times.** We are working hard to reduce and then maintain our cycle times in the building permit process and in engineering review.

**Procedures manual.** We created our first-ever electronic procedures manual. This provides information on management decisions, procedures, tasks, and accountability for our activities.

**Accountability.** Starting this year we are tracking all our permit time by activity and will be able to tell applicants exactly what permit processing actually costs.

**Document management.** We have made great strides in not losing documents. We have set up a document management system to make sure we always know where plans and permits are located.

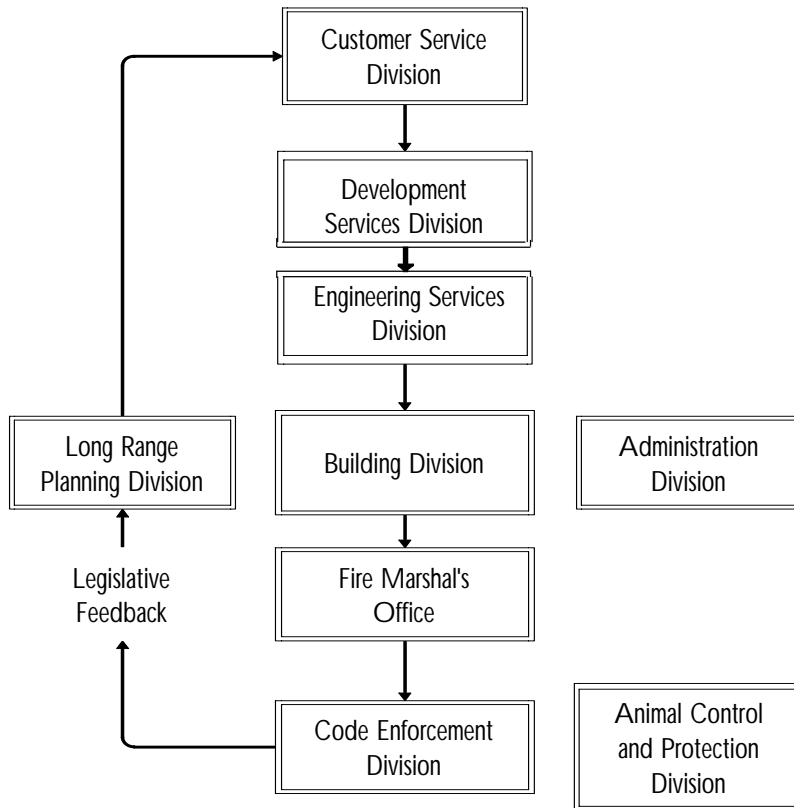
**Development code rewrite.** This is an enormous undertaking, but it will result in a development code that is easier for staff and the public to understand and is more consistent in its interpretations.

Although I am very happy with the progress we have achieved, I know there is a lot more to do. When it comes to continuous improvement, ***there is no finish line in this race.***

Sincerely,

Richard H. Carson, director

## Process chart: form follows function



The Department of Community Development is organized into eight divisions to help us make our workflow as efficient and productive as possible. The organizational theory would be “form follows function.” In other words, the overall function of regulating property development — be it a garage addition or a large subdivision — follows a specific path through the organization.

Applicants start by going to the Customer Service Division permit counter to find out what kind of permit(s) are required. Once an **application** is submitted, it is reviewed for compliance with the county’s **planning** and **engineering** requirements. Then project field **inspections** are completed.

After the project is approved, it’s time to get the actual **building permit** and inspections from the Building Division and Fire Marshal’s Office. Once constructed, all existing properties and buildings must continue to conform to the county’s regulations and are subject to review by the Code Enforcement Division. The Animal Control Division

performs a similar service, but focuses on animals instead of property development.

When the Board of Clark County Commissioners decides to change county codes or regulations, it’s time to involve the Long Range Planning Division. Through public outreach programs, Long Range Planning keeps the county rethinking how it does business.

Throughout all of this cycle, the Administration Division provides both oversight and quality control functions. Its job is to keep working on making the process fair, objective, consistent, and cost-efficient.





## 2001 Community Development Annual Report

### Our mission statement

We implement the community's vision of the future through managed growth, quality construction, and community safety. We preserve community livability, safeguard the public good, and strive to ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Clark County has a new web address:

[www.clark.wa.gov](http://www.clark.wa.gov)

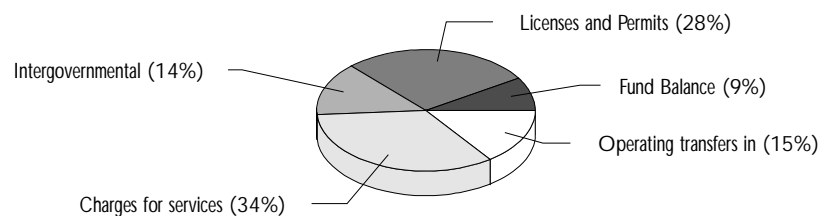
### Budget

Community Development performs the county's planning function and regulates development and land use by enforcing building, plumbing, fire codes, and land use ordinances. The department also manages the county's Animal Control and Fire Marshal programs.

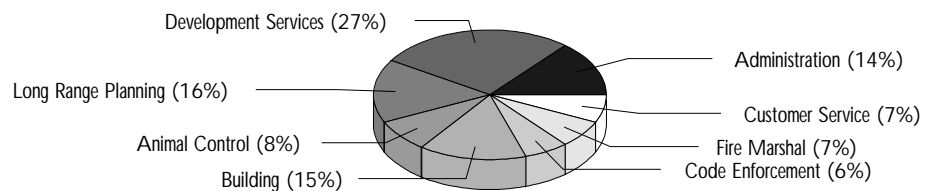
Each division within the department reports to the director, who in turn reports to the county administrator. In the adopted 2001-2002 budget, the department received a total budget of more than \$21.3 million,

which represents four percent of the total county budget. The department currently has staffing authority for 126.5 full-time equivalent positions.

#### Revenue



#### Expenses





## Development trends

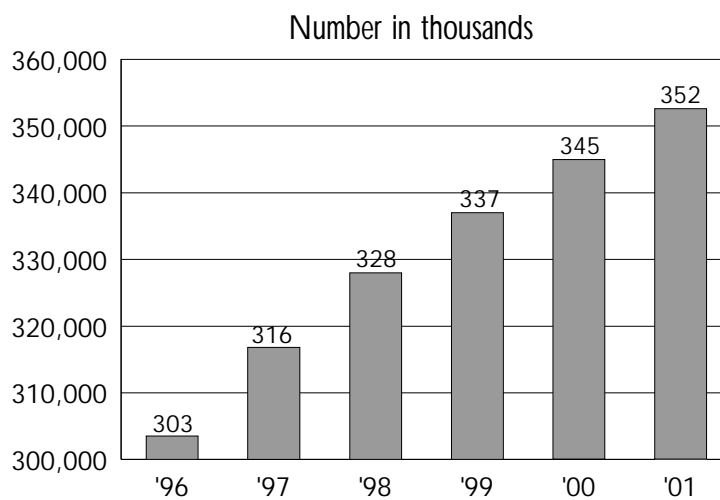
### Recorded Clark County home sales

	<b>Existing Homes</b>	<b>New Homes</b>	<b>Mobile Homes</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
<b>2001</b>	5,766	2,411	160	8,337	\$1.47 billion
<b>2000</b>	5,244	2,208	147	7,599	\$1.31 billion
<b>1999</b>	5,243	2,535	143	7,921	\$1.30 billion
<b>1998</b>	5,572	2,770	169	8,511	\$1.35 billion
<b>1997</b>	4,927	2,564	172	7,312	\$1.17 billion

SOURCE: "Benchmarks," a service of Riley and Marks, Inc.



### Population growth in Clark County





### Customer Service

Think of the Customer Service Division as the starting gate of Community Development. All applications for land use and building permits are received at the 1408 Franklin Permit Center and our satellite office in Battle Ground. Thanks to Clark County's strong construction industry, the total number of building permits issued by Customer Service in 2001, was a whopping 5,623! Permits issued for single-family residences lead the pack with an increase of 28 percent over last year. Land use applications increased by 15 percent, with a total of 1,186 received.

Customer Service Specialists advise and assist applicants in all aspects of the development process from pre-application confer-

promptly sends all incoming calls to the operator and has the capability of routing them to the next available person. In addition, individual staff members responded to over 12,000 telephone calls with an additional 4,200 calls received through the "Information" lines in 2001. The Clark County web site also provides a direct e-mail link for questions.

All of our staff respond to daily requests from citizens, realtors, lenders, and title insurance companies to research property records so that title eliminations and mortgages may be approved. They maintain all active building files and update building records with all inspection results and corrections every day. In 2001 the volume of inspection results recorded was over 300 entries every day! Staff also interacts with contractors and building inspectors in the field, relaying information on site-specific requirements and previous corrections. In 2002, we expect to improve our service with an upgraded permit system and with a new Interactive Voice Response system, which will more efficiently handle inspection requests and results.

As long as our citizens place a high value on ensuring that quality building and development continue in Clark County, our Customer Service Division sees no finish line



Community Development Specialist Debi Miller takes in a building permit application.

ences to final site plan. As part of final plat approval, addresses are assigned to all parcels and information is coordinated with the Geographical Information System in the Assessor's Office. Customer Service provides these new addresses to the post office, public safety officials, and to county Public Works so that the proper street signs are installed in new developments.

A new Automatic Call Distribution system was installed in mid-December, improving our ability to respond and handle an average of 5,000 calls a month. The new system

## Development Services

Our focus during the year was to improve service during our final engineering plan review. We began with interviews of the major engineering firms in Vancouver, asking how we could improve. Their experiences and ideas proved very valuable.

Our first change involved combining the final construction plan review and final site plan review into one application and review process. This placed the burden of coordinating the two reviews on the county rather than the developer.

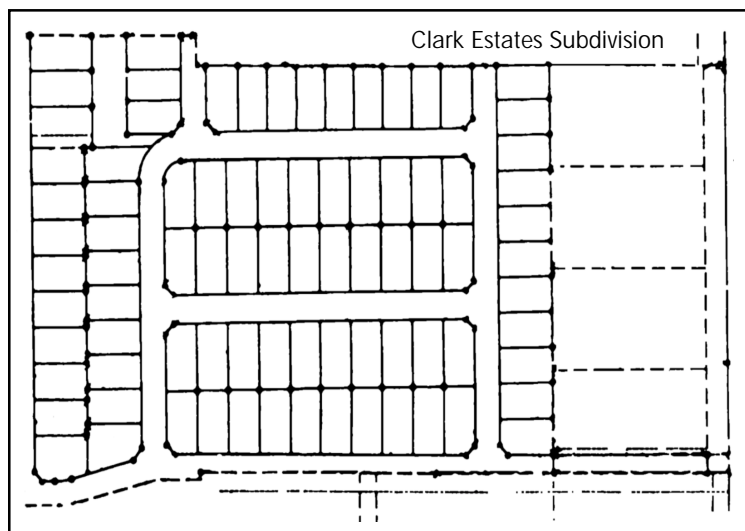
We next developed a new “Final Construction and Site Plan Review Information Handout.” This includes an explanation of the new process and a newly created submittal checklist.

The division also completed its policies and procedures manual. All new administrative decisions, code interpretations, plan review and inspection procedures and tasks, and more than 50 forms have been merged into a single document. This will help ensure consistent information and service to our employees and customers, improve efficiency, and serve as a repository for new and better ways to perform duties.

For 2002, we will continue to focus on improving our customer service skills and the products we produce. We will be adding slide shows to our web page, and you can expect to see improved visual presentations from staff at our public hearings. You can also expect us to expand our outreach contacts to

neighborhood associations and the development community.

The many comments and great suggestions for improvement from our customers continue to help us set our direction, and we thank you. Please don't hesitate to send us your ideas.



As suggested by firms that were interviewed, we began meeting with the consulting engineer upon completion of the first “redline” review. This helped to reduce common misunderstandings in reading and understanding “redline” comments.

We also focused on expanding our web page. We completed over 20 information handouts, bringing our total to over 50. We added agendas for pre-application conferences and hearings, and now include staff reports and final decisions. In mid-year, we started including scanned images of proposed land development plans.





### Engineering Services

In the fall, the Engineering and Inspection Teams broke away from Development Services and became a new Engineering Services Division. Maureen Knutson became the Engineering Division Manager. Maureen was the Development Inspection Team Leader for the past five years and is a licensed Civil Engineer in the state of Washington.

Benefits of this new structure include stronger communication between management and staff, greater employee accountability, improved efficiencies within the division, and more customer satisfaction.

#### Engineering team

The engineers review all final engineering on each project. This involves coordination with habitat, wetlands, Fire Marshal, Public Works, concurrency, utilities, and other staff. Once final engineering is approved, we handoff to the inspection and building teams. During construction, we help with any design issues that may surface. We work closely with the final plat and final site plan process. Finally, we review as-builts, then sign off on project occupancy or provisional acceptance.

**Accomplishments.** During 2001, we established plan check cycle times for completing construction plan reviews: 21 days for first review, 14 days for second review, and seven days for third review, with 21 days for subsequent reviews. Following the first review, staff meets with the development design team to discuss redline comments and clarify any remaining issues. This helps reduce miscommunication and unnecessary delays.

**2002 goals.** We are revising and monitoring internal processes to ensure that target plan check cycle times are met. Our 2002 goal is that 85 percent of plans will be reviewed three times or less. We will also hire an additional engineer to address peaks, revise codes, improve processes, and perform training for staff and local consultants during off peak periods. In addition we will begin work on design standards, simplify plan approvals, and

improve our tracking system, filing system, and more.

#### Final plat/final site plan

**2002 goals.** We are reviewing existing processes to identify opportunities for streamlining and improving efficiencies. During 2002, staff will talk with the development community to get ideas on ways to provide better service. We will also improve the permit tracking system to enhance tracking and reporting capabilities.

#### Inspection team

The Inspection Team oversees construction of privately funded development projects. Our focus is on stormwater and transportation improvements, emphasizing erosion control and compliance with development codes. We ensure that the county meets stormwater and erosion control inspection requirements for its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System municipal stormwater discharge permit. We also provide project-related utilities inspections.

**Accomplishments.** We started a one-day Erosion Control certification course. Under a new ordinance, all projects must have a certified erosion control supervisor on board. Currently 611 individuals have passed this course. Call Clark County Home Builders, (360)694-0933, to register for the class.

**2002 goals.** We are developing and implementing several performance measures to improve customer responsiveness and provide consistency in the communications process.

#### Accomplishments:

- We reviewed 34 subdivisions, 50 site plans, 12 short plats, 9 drainage projects, and 98 grading permits.
- Staff processed 68 final plats and 70 final site plan applications. 37 plats were recorded.
- We had about 124 active projects with 6,797 site visits. We inspected for transportation, stormwater and erosion, and associated utility inspections.
- The inspectors conducted 1,410 stormwater inspections, and 1,256 erosion control inspections.
- We inspected 53 maintenance warranty projects in 2001.

## Building Division

Over all, the division has had a great year, thanks to the customers and citizens of Clark County. We have provided the very best customer service possible, even with staff shortages and other challenges. As changes occur due to the recommendations of the performance audit and the Community Development strategic plan, we should see continuing improvements in customer service over the coming year.

### Plan review

A lead plan examiner position was created to ensure uniform reviews and design Clark County Code-specific details for applicants. The new continuous same-as plan review process is now current and a tremendous success. The plans examiners have been working hard to keep up with record permit applications. Over 2,100 plans were approved.

### The future of inspections

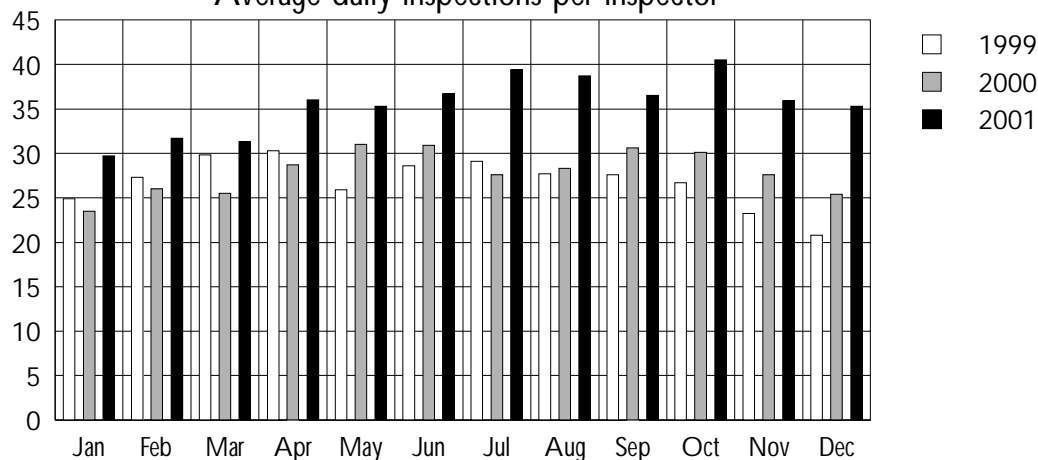
We are researching the feasibility of automating our inspection request line. Customers would be able to call in with their permit information and request their inspections. Once the inspection has been completed, the inspector immediately inputs the results from the field. Customers could then call in to retrieve the result of their inspections and even listen to messages from the inspector pertain-



Clark County still on the move – Washington State University continues to expand.

ing to corrections or special instructions. This same system would ensure accuracy and is one more way to provide the highest level of service and efficiency to our customers.

**85,000 Inspections for 2001**  
Average daily inspections per inspector







In 2001, the division:

- Conducted 1,500 inspections of existing occupancies and buildings.
- Reviewed 902 sets of plans and application materials submitted for land use applications and commercial building permits.
- Performed 766 fire protection system and fire-and-life-safety building inspections relating to new construction.
- Investigated 222 fire incidents.
- Issued more than 5,000 outdoor burning permits.

### Fire Marshal

#### Workload measures

This division made improvements in most service delivery areas in 2001:

- Property owners are increasingly aware of fire hazards at their businesses – reducing the need for fire marshal reinspections by approximately 14 percent.
- On average, plan reviews and land use applications were reviewed within 2.3 days after receipt. This is 46 percent of the allotted five-day turnaround time and three percent less than our three-year average turnaround time.
- Fire and building inspectors jointly inspected and approved new commercial occupancies. This partnership means we only need to reinspect 13 out of every 100 inspections.

#### Major accomplishments

In June, the Fire Marshal's Office joined with the Clark County Sheriff, Fire District #6, Fire District #12 and Fire District #11 in relocating to the Public Safety Complex at the Clark County Fairgrounds. The new 20,000 square-foot structure provides emergency fire and medical services throughout the three fire districts and houses the Sheriff's West Precinct and Fire Marshal's offices.

This move puts staff closer to the communities they serve and places them in an area where high growth is expected. Fire Marshal

plan review staff continue to have their offices in the Community Development Building where building permit and land use applications are issued.

The Fire Marshal's staff worked with private consultants and safety personnel from N-Light Corporation to successfully review, inspect, and approve N-Light's Clark County wafer fabrication plant. This unique arrangement assures the safe operation of the many tools, equipment, and protection materials used for hazardous jobs.

We merged our procedures that relate to evidence collection and handling related to fire investigation with the Sheriff's property management program. Evidence collected at the scene of arson or other incendiary fires is now maintained in the same manner as the evidence collected for other crimes. This change speeds processing and provides other prosecutorial and law enforcement agencies with better access to information.



Deputy Fire Marshals Jim Kambeitz and Tom Scott inspecting equipment for readiness.

### Code Enforcement

In 2001, Code Enforcement opened more than 2,000 new cases, an increase from 1,741 last year. This includes the investigation of nuisance, building, zoning, and erosion control violations.

The NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Code Enforcement Officers continue to take every opportunity to educate the public about erosion control. Educational training has been provided by Sheila Pendleton-Orme and Scott Melville to private contractors, WSU, erosion control certification classes, and new homeowners.

Starting this year, Code Enforcement Appeal Hearings are filmed and can be seen regularly on Clark-Vancouver TV, Channel 23. This change has been beneficial in educating the public about the appeals process, as well as creating an awareness of code regulations enforced in Clark County, plus penalties imposed for non-compliance.

#### Caseload Comparison



Erosion Control Certification Class



Before

Here is an example of how code enforcement efforts continue to bring property in violation of nuisance and building code into compliance. In 2001, Code Enforcement experienced a 54 percent success rate for compliance within 60 days.



After





### Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning has primary responsibility for the county's comprehensive plan and implementing county code. Major projects include the ten-year review of the comprehensive plan, monitoring growth in the county, long range transportation and capital facilities planning, and various ordinances amending the county code. The division staffs both the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission.

#### Land Use

The Board of Clark County Commissioners provided major policy direction for us to complete the ongoing comprehensive plan review. We are planning for a rate of 1.5 percent population growth until the year 2023. Working closely with the cities through a steering committee, we revised policies regarding single-family and multi-family housing splits. We evaluated the ability to accommodate forecast population growth (approximately 140,000 over the planning horizon) within existing urban growth areas, and initiated an environmental impact statement for potential urban growth area expansion.

We are also working with the Columbia River Economic Development Council to develop a strategy to improve the jobs-to-housing ratio in the county.

#### Code amendments

In response to citizen input we implemented an ordinance regulating conversion of forest resource land to non-forest uses. A citizen task force helped us make significant progress in developing a new ordinance which encourages and regulates "infill" development on undeveloped lots within existing urban communities. An ordinance to regulate cell tower sitings and other wireless communications facilities is very close to adoption. We also initiated an ordinance addressing industrial-oriented home businesses in rural communities.

#### Code restructure

We are restructuring the county code to

eliminate inconsistencies and make the document easier for staff and citizens to use. Objectives include:

- Putting all language relating to development into one place in the code.
- Updating purpose statements, enhancing definitions of terms, and ensuring language consistency among code sections. Part of this effort includes identifying possible language changes to ordinances, but the overall goal is to keep the simplification process policy neutral.
- Merging environmental ordinances into one chapter of the code and determining what constitutes Best Available Science (BAS) for managing resources. The State Growth Management Act requires that BAS be used in critical area ordinances protecting key natural functions, such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, and water quality. The code restructure process will identify where code changes based on BAS may be needed. Actually revising development standards will occur through a subsequent process.

#### Plan Monitoring

In July, we completed the "Buildable Lands Report." This provides information on growth experienced between 1995 and 2000 in the county and each of its cities, including:

- Increased single-family residential development.
- Increased density (units per acre) at which single-family development was experienced.
- Increased multi-family residential development.
- Density (units per acre) at which multi-family development was experienced.
- Increased commercial and industrial development..
- Employment density (workers per acre) for commercial and industrial uses.
- Amount of development that occurred in critical areas (wetlands, habitat areas, etc.).

We compiled Year 2000 U.S. Census information and presented it to the board and steering committee. We also refined the

county's vacant buildable lands model in response to community input.

### Transportation planning

We completed a new traffic impact fee assessment methodology and revised the traffic impact fee schedule. The board placed a moratorium in the Salmon Creek Corridor to allow time for county staff to address traffic concerns. We completed a neighborhood circulation study for the 88<sup>th</sup> Street area north of the Padden Parkway and undertook a policy discussion of land use near the major roadway interchanges.

### Transportation and community and system preservation (TCSP) grant

Clark County received a grant to explore the balance between transportation concurrency and growth management. While both goals are part of state law and sound urban planning, often the programs encourage conflicting patterns of growth. This study is meant to find ways to balance these objectives and identify the changes needed to do so.

We will first study system and operational improvements. For instance, it may be beneficial to recognize all road improvement projects in the six year program as funded. Or we may find that only recognizing three years of road improvements, as is done now, produces greater benefits.

Next, the county could allocate transportation capacity to desired land uses through a focused public-investment strategy.

Combining advanced computer modeling guidance from nationally recognized concurrency experts, we expect to produce recommendations that can be considered during the comprehensive plan review.

### Historic preservation

We integrated the historic inventory completed in 2000 into the Geographical Information System and Permit Planning systems. Now development review staff, the public, and the development community have thor-

ough information on local cultural assets. The board also adopted an updated archaeological predictive model map.

The Historic Preservation Program recently received a \$21,000 grant to develop an historic tour of many sites in and around Vancouver. The tour will have a strong educational component, featuring full-color brochures available at custom-designed kiosks.

### Capital facilities planning

We updated school district capital facilities plans during the year and school impact fee increases were approved for the Evergreen, La Center, and Ridgefield School Districts.

We also updated the Vancouver-Clark County Urban Parks Master Plan for the Vancouver urban growth area plus the associated park impact fee schedule.

### Salmon Creek Moratorium

Staff continues to prepare for the Board of Clark County Commissioner's public hearing on the Salmon Creek moratorium scheduled for January 29, 2002. At that time, the board will consider the moratorium imposed as an emergency action on December 4, 2001. They could extend it until December 4, 2002. The moratorium was enacted in light of the transportation concurrency failure of the Salmon Creek Avenue corridor. The boundaries of the Salmon Creek moratorium area are Interstate-5 on the west, NE 159<sup>th</sup> Street or the equivalent on the north, NE 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the east, and NE 129<sup>th</sup> Street, Interstate-205, and Salmon Creek on the south.

More information may be obtained by contacting Evan Dust at the Clark County Department of Community Development, 1408 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Or call (360) 397-2375 ext. 4913.







## Animal Protection and Control

Animal Protection and Control is a regional program regulating local and state laws about animals. Often the public perceives this responsibility as one of picking up stray animals, inspecting facilities, and licensing pets. In actuality, a major division function involves coordination and facilitation of the many public/private partnerships that make up our community resources. In 2001 animal welfare and control services were provided through 28 separate contractual agreements, ranging from emergency response and animal sheltering to agents for pet licensing.

Two new partnership programs were implemented in 2001:

- **Community Spay/Neuter Assistance Program** - Provides funding for Clark County organizations whose programs, or projects promote animal welfare through the spaying and neutering of domestic pets.
- **Low Income Assistance Program** - Assists qualified low-income households to offset the cost of pet licensing for one year.

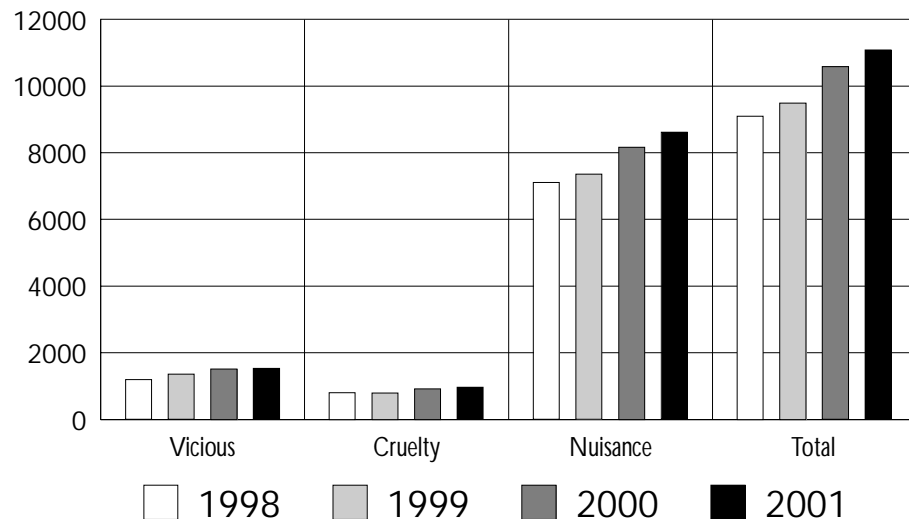
Animal Control operates seven days per week. Five animal control officers and two licensing officers respond to complaints dur-



Officer Barbara Dunn making a stop at the Southwest Washington Humane Society.

ing standard business hours. Emergency response is available after normal business hours. Calls are prioritized for response according to public safety guidelines.

### Caseload Comparison





## Development activity indicators

### Year end 2001 for unincorporated Clark County

Pre-applications are an indicator of the number of land use applications the department may receive in the future. The pre-application process takes three months. In general, a pre-application today results in a preliminary planning land use application in six to 12 months.

	2001	2000	1999	1998	YR 00-01	YR 99-00	YR 98-99
					% chng	% chng	% chng
Pre-application conference	254	243	278	179	5%	-13%	55%

	2001	2000	1999	1998	YR 00-01	YR 99-00	YR 98-99
					% chng	% chng	% chng
Preliminary plan review					% chng	% chng	% chng
Short plats	22	27	47	25	-19%	-43%	88%
Short plat lots	66	63	119	68	5%	-47%	75%
Subdivisions	20	36	47	32	-44%	-23%	47%
Subdivision lots	526	909	777	1,075	-42%	17%	-28%
Total lots	592	972	896	1,143	-39%	8%	-22%
Site plan reviews	100	114	109	63	-12%	5%	73%
Conditional use permits	15	14	16	6	7%	-13%	167%
Total land use permits	1,186	1,032	1,306	1,329	15%	-21%	-2%

Preliminary planning reviews proceed to final construction plan engineering review. Projects in engineering review in 2001 probably entered the land use application system in 1999 or 2000

	2001	2000	1999	1998	YR 00-01	YR 99-00	YR 98-99
Final construction plan review					% chng	% chng	% chng
Short plats	12	11	21	10	9%	-48%	110%
Short plat lots	38	37	64	35	3%	-42%	83%
Subdivisions	34	41	49	58	-17%	-16%	-16%
Subdivision lots	887	920	1,924	1,750	-4%	-52%	10%
Total Lots	925	957	1,988	1,785	-3%	-52%	11%
Site plans	50	48	52	39	4%	-8%	33%
Drainage projects	9	29	9	12	-69%	222%	-25%
Grading permits	98	106	117	98	-8%	-9%	19%

	2001	2000	1999	1998	YR 00-01	YR 99-00	YR 98-99
Final land division					% chng	% chng	% chng
Short plats	25	38	15	10	-34%	153%	50%
Short plat lots	74	108	43	34	-31%	151%	26%
Subdivisions	37	46	47	58	-20%	-2%	-19%
Subdivision lots	775	1,095	1,773	941	-29%	-38%	88%
Total Lots	849	1,203	1,816	975	-29%	-34%	86%

Changes in land use and engineering permit activity indicate a potential for future changes in building permit activity. The number of lots in subdivisions and short plats influence future residential single-family permits.

	2001	2000	1999	1998	YR 00-01	YR 99-00	YR 98-99
Building Permits	YTD				% chng	% chng	% chng
Single-family dwelling units	2,329	1,825	1,974	2,104	28%	-8%	-6%
Multi-family dwelling units	181	168	157	257	8%	7%	-39%
Commercial projects	228	300	161	225	-24%	86%	-28%
Total valuation in millions	\$394	\$295	\$321	\$316	34%	-8%	2%
Total building permits	6,333	5,573	5,873	5,939	14%	-5%	-1%

	2001	2000	2000-01
	Year End	Year End	YTD % chg
Home sales			
New listings	10,500	10,181	3%
Pending sales	6,157	5,515	12%
Closed sales	5,523	5,168	7%
Average sales price	180,200	175,400	3%
Median sales price	156,900	151,500	4%
Average market time	84	87	-3%

Source: Clark County Board of Realtors

Home sales are an indicator of the market demand for homes. When there is a strong home sales market, developers take a greater interest in taking the risks necessary to propose new developments. In weaker home sales markets, developers may proceed more slowly in turning land use applications into building permits. In weaker home sales markets, developers are also more likely to use lots that are sitting in inventory rather than creating new lots.



From 2000 to 2001:

- Building permits for single-family dwellings were up by 28 percent
- Total construction valuation was up by 34 percent
- Pre-application conferences were up by five percent
- New residential lots in engineering were down 29 percent



### Performance Audit

#### A race to the finish line?

The Community Development Performance Audit was managed by the County Auditor's Office and presented to the Board of Clark County Commissioners in December 2000. This meant the challenge of implementing 43 performance audit recommendations. We took responding to the audit very seriously and dedicated intensive time and effort to its accomplishment.

Comparing the performance audit to a foot race captures the flavor and intensity of the department's efforts last year. In the performance audit race, the support crew included staff from customer services, development services, engineering, administration, and long range planning. They needed good strategies, an awareness of the other participants, and the courage to run a good race. No runners fell, although there were a few close calls, and even a replacement or two.

In 2001, we scheduled 35 recommendations to be implemented. In our performance audit race, 32 of the contenders started from the blocks, but three others decided to run in 2002. Sixteen starters were fast and have already completed the race. Sixteen more are still on the track, but on their way to the finish line.

The importance of this race cannot be underestimated. Staff worked on recommendations for improved technology, fees, customer satisfaction, development processes, and employee resources and training. Table 1 on the next page shows each of our performance audit recommendations and their current status on the track.

Although the performance audit has a finish line, our goal of following a continuous improvement philosophy does not. The performance audit is only one of several tools the department uses to improve our services to the community.

	Recommendation	Status
	<b>AREA 1: Technology</b>	
7.13	Continue to solve department computer-tracking problems	On Schedule
7.14	Invest in technological advances for Building Division	On Schedule
	<b>AREA 2: Fees</b>	
8.6	Make cost accounting and monitoring fee related productivity a program manager responsibility	Complete
8.3	Improve cost accounting system to accurately track costs of processing applications	Complete
8.2	Increase customer involvement in annual review of cost of service fees	Complete
7.11	Work with board and consumer groups to review building permits fees	Complete
8.1	Annually review development services fees and adjust fees as part of the budget development process	Complete
8.5	Consolidate fees where possible and use averages for establishing costs for minor applications	Complete
7.10	Support standardized building codes and fees	Complete
8.4	Use a trust fund deposit system for major projects in lieu of existing fee system	Complete
	<b>AREA 3: Improvement of customer satisfaction</b>	
5.4	Start a continuous improvement program administered by the Customer Service Division	On Schedule
7.3	Set standards for building plan review quality and establish peer review spot check process to determine staffing needs	On Schedule
5.1	Develop effective performance measures that relate directly to customer satisfaction with regard to clarity, timeliness, and appropriateness of fees	On Schedule
7.1	Adopt and implement formalized standard for turnaround time of building plan review that is consistent with customer expectations	On Schedule
	<b>AREA 4: Role definition</b>	
6.8	Board and department work together to define roles and goals in governing the operation.	Underway
6.11	Appoint Audit Implementation Committee	Complete
9.5	Encourage staff to provide professional advice to all task forces and advisory groups	Underway
6.7	Reinforce functional chain of command	Underway
7.6	Require customers to request inspections through the established process	Complete
	<b>AREA 5: Employee resources and training</b>	
5.3	Exit interviews for all employees leaving county service	Complete
6.13	Reclass two CD specialists as supervisors (i.e. leads) and closely monitor absenteeism and turnover	Underway
7.7	Hire permanent office assistant for building	Complete
7.5	Increase building inspections staff by 1 full-time employee	Underway
6.4	Hold employees accountable for best practices cycle time standards and unanticipated service standards	On Schedule
7.8	Increase training and equipment for Building Division	On Schedule
6.9	Increase staff knowledge of the private sector	On Schedule
	<b>AREA 6: Development process improvement</b>	
6.6	Reduce subdivision/plat map and engineering infrastructure review from eight months to six months by instituting all-hands meetings and more effectively using consulting engineers.	Complete
6.3	Start an unanticipated service program	Complete
7.2	Establish positive incentives for building re-submittals returned in a timely manner	Underway
6.1	Focus management attention on deemed fully complete process and provide customer choice to achieve a 30-day cycle time standard	Complete
7.4	Track re-inspections at the input stage and reduce number of re-inspections through a multienforcement approach	On Schedule
6.2	Start case management approach for development projects for at a minimum type two and type three applications	On Schedule





### And much more...

#### Community Development spirit

Our employees demonstrated their community spirit both on and off the job in many ways during the past year. Three prime examples of Community Development employee efforts to reach out and help others less fortunate included the Children's Sharing Project, the annual Holiday Food Drive, and bimonthly blood donations to the American Red Cross.

The Children's Sharing Project is an annual countywide event that provides needy children and parents with holiday gifts that wouldn't be available without generous donations. Unselfish gift-giving by Community Development employees resulted in numerous wishes being granted during the holiday season. Imagine the joy of a child when opening a beautifully wrapped gift that had been requested, but not expected.

The county's annual food drive was a roaring success in our department and generated a lot of pride as well as a strong spirit of competition among our divisions during the campaign. Our department alone contributed more than a TON of food items that were graciously received by the Salvation Army for distribution throughout the community.

Another source of pride in our department has been the huge response to pleas for blood donations from the American Red Cross. Employees responded to the monthly blood drives in record numbers and truly made a difference in the lives of others.

Although the donations of our employees' personal time, money, and efforts have been acknowledged throughout the year, we want to express our appreciation – and pride – in the fact that Community Development employees continually demonstrate their spirit of community through sharing, caring, and reaching out to those less fortunate. Their camaraderie not only benefits others in the community through their donations, but our work family is rewarded tenfold by their generosity. Our employees consistently show that Community Development is more than a workplace – it's a way of life.

#### Community Pride Design Awards

The Sixth Annual Community Pride Design Awards event was held Wednesday, November 7, at the City of Vancouver Water Resource Education Center.

The Community Pride Design Awards program was established in 1996 by public and private organizations within Clark County as a means of recognizing outstanding buildings, development, and civic improvements that have had a positive impact on the community. Of the 27 nominations received this year, seven were honored for their outstanding and unique efforts in architectural design, community enhancement, public facilities, and residential development. Four projects were selected for Honorable Mention. As in the past, community leaders presented the awards. Photographs of the seven award recipients and four honorable mention projects were on display.

Clark County and the city of Vancouver coordinate the program, providing staff to carry out the numerous activities that need to be accomplished to ensure the success of the event.

#### Award Winners:

- Clark County Fire District No. 12 - Station No. 3
- Battle Ground Central Park
- Felida Odd Fellows Hall
- Firstenburg Family Fountain
- Firehouse No. 12
- Columbia Springs Environmental Education Center
- Esther Short Community Square

#### Honorable Mentions:

- Amboy Territorial Days Park - Log Show Stage
- "Welcome to Vancouver" sign
- Garden Park Townhomes
- YW Housing - Val Ogden House and Jubilee House



Felida Odd Fellows Hall



Firehouse No. 12



Firstenberg Family Fountain







Administration  
(360)397-2375 ext.4936  
commdev@clark.wa.gov

Animal Control  
(360)397-2375 ext.2488  
animal@clark.wa.gov

Building  
(360)397-2375 ext.4349  
building@clark.wa.gov

Code Enforcement  
(360)397-2375 ext.4184  
codenfor@clark.wa.gov

Development Services  
(360)397-2375 ext.4997  
devserv@clark.wa.gov

Engineering Services  
(360)397-2375 ext.4559  
engserv@clark.wa.gov

Fire Marshal  
(360)397-2186  
firemar@clark.wa.gov

Long Range Planning  
(360)397-2375 ext.4993  
longrang@clark.wa.gov

## 2001 Community Development Annual Report

### Continuing Education

#### Community Development University

In 1997, the Development Services Division began providing mini-training sessions to staff. These training sessions were held twice a week for one hour each, and covered subjects from implementing new ordinances to Power Point tips to writing skills. Staff provided the training. In 1998, we decided to expand the training, offer it to the entire department, and call the program Community Development University or CDU. Since then, the program has evolved into a three-quarter-per-year program, similar to a school year. We take the summer off. The majority of the training still comes from our employees. However, on occasion, we invite others to participate. For example, we sometimes ask the county's Prosecuting Attorney or Hearings Examiner to give a presentation. Recently, the county's Public Works employees and the city of Vancouver's Community Development staff began attending our classes. And in mid-2001, we opened these sessions to neighborhood associations.

We get our ideas for training from staff. Periodically, we conduct a survey and find out what type of training they want. Sometimes, if the training cannot be provided successfully in one hour, we provide that training in a different arena.

We have just started our winter session. If you are interested in reviewing our sched-

ule, please look on our web page or call Marie Day at 397-2375 ext. 4936.

#### Private Sector Training

One of the recommendations of the department's performance audit was to "increase staff's knowledge of the private sector." To accomplish this we have set a special training program where folks from the private sector come to our office and give staff presentations on the various aspects of development process we don't see or get involved in. Our first presentation was by Ron Fredericksen of RSV Construction. Ron explained how he manages complex commercial construction projects. Chris Helms with New Tradition Homes gave a similar presentation that focused on residential projects. Mike Worthy of the Bank of Clark County explained the basics of financing development projects. In the near future, we are going to have a presentation on what title companies do and one on school district construction.

Division managers have also begun to go to the office of and visit with their private sector counterparts. For example, we visit with developers and their consulting firms to talk about our regulatory processes to see if there are problems we can solve. If you would like to share some insight in the development business, then call Kathi Curtis at 360-397-2375, extension 4382.



Clark County  
Community Development  
PO Box 9810  
Vancouver WA 98666-9810

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